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# ENG 3405-001: Children's Literature

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English 3405 Children's Literature (3 credit hours)

Spring 2019

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### **Course Description**

From the Catalog:

*Study of the rich variety of texts written for or primarily read by children, including picture books, poetry, fairy tales, chapter books, and novels. Emphases include historical, cultural, pedagogical, critical, and theoretical perspectives.*

What this means this semester:

We will have the great pleasure of encountering lots of texts read by children over the last three hundred years. As we travel through time and genres we will consider some central questions. What assumptions do adults make in writing and choosing books for children? How have social and political forces left their mark on young people's literature? What makes a children's book "good" of its type? How can we use what we learn about the past to develop criteria for choosing "good" books now?

This course takes time to look at the roots of various types of literary productions for children. Seeing how they developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries strengthens our understanding of the intersections between social history, philosophy, technological change and children's books. As we tackle more modern readings, we should have a better sense of what forces are at play in determining what kids read.

A historical approach also gives us a chance to see how genres and formats have evolved over time. It should broaden our understanding of the conventions and possibilities of various fictions as we encounter the rich diversity of contemporary children's literature.

Expect this class to be challenging and fun, perplexing and enlightening. There will be opportunities for your own individual encounters with 'kid lit' through journal entries as well as seminar style class discussion of common texts. Fair warning: this class is not designed to be a lecture course. I will expect you to read and participate in discussions a lot. Consider this class a mutual journey through interesting landscapes during which we talk about what all of us see along the way, every day that we meet.

### **Learning Goals**

1. Experience a wide range of literature (genres and formats) produced for children.
2. Understand the ways in which children's literature has been shaped by various social, cultural and technological forces over time.
3. Become familiar with the characteristics of various genres enjoyed by children: realistic and fantasy fiction, fairy and folk tales, fables and poetry.
4. Understand the conventions and innovative possibilities of various formats including picture books, chapter books, novels, and graphic narratives.
5. Gain experience in working with scholarly resources and collections related to the study and selection of children's books.

### **Course Texts and Materials**

In addition to the books from the Textbook Rental Center listed below, students are asked to download, print and bring to class selections from other works posted on D2L. Please check the schedule of readings and bring the relevant ones to class each day.

**Picture Books:** Matt de la Pena *Last Stop on Market Street* / Jon Klassen *This is Not My Hat* / Barbara Lehman *The Red Book* / Maurice Sendak *Where the Wild Things Are* / Dr. Seuss “And to Think that I Saw it on Mulberry Street” and “The Lorax” in *Six by Seuss*.

**Chapter Books:** Kate DiCamillo *The Tale of Despereaux* / Katherine Paterson *The Great Gilly Hopkins* / and Jeri Spinelli *Maniac Magee*.

**Text Books:** Jack Zipes et al *The Norton Anthology of Children’s Literature* (NACL) and Kathleen Horning *From Cover to Cover*.

### **Schedule of Readings and Assignment Due Dates**

Subject to Revision as Needed

#### **Week One: Designing Fun for Dick and Jane**

**T Jan 8: Course Overview and the Real Mother Goose – The Curious History of Nursery Rhymes**

**R Jan 10: John Locke’s Clean Slate**

Excerpts from John Locke’s *Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) on D2L

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#### **Week Two : Animal Fables and the Eighteenth Century Child**

**T Jan 15: Fables of Aesop and Others**

Stories from NACL (please read intros to the individual authors too!) - Samuel Croxall “The Fox and the Crow” 395-6, William Godwin “The Dog in the Manger” and “The Ass in the Lion’s Skin” 397-9, selections from Walter Crane’s *Baby’s Own Aesop* 399-401, W. H. Rouse “The Crocodile and the Monkey” 401-2, James Thurber “The Fox and the Crow, Variations on the Theme” 408-9, Ashley Bryan “Tortoise, Hare and the Sweet Potatoes” 410-12.

**R Jan 17: Rousseau Objects to the Raven (amongst other things)**

Excerpts from Jean Jacques Rousseau’s *Julie* or *La Nouvelle Heloise* (1761) and *Emile* (1762) on D2L.

#### **Complete Journal Assignment 1**

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## Week Three: Fairy Tales

### T Jan 22: From Court to Kitchen

Charles Perrault's "Master Cat or Puss in Boots" (1697) NACL 186-9 and "Little Red Riding Hood" (1697) NACL 343-4, and Charles Dickens' "The Magic Fishbone" (1868) on D2L

### R Jan 24: Having a Go at Perrault

Walter de la Mare "Little Red Riding Hood" (1927) NACL 351-5, Catherine Storr "Little Polly Riding Hood" (1955) NACL 356-8, Roald Dahl "Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf" (1982) NACL 359-6, Francesca Lia Block "Wolf" (2000) NACL 381-6, Patricia McKissak "Flossie and the Fox" on D2L.

## Complete Journal Assignment 2

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## Week Four: Reading Women – Early Fiction for Girls

### T Jan 29: Wollstonecraft Objects to Rousseau

Excerpts from Mary Wollstonecraft's *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787) and *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1787) on D2L plus the selection from Sarah Fielding's *The Governess or the Little Female Academy* (1749-50) NACL 1817-25.

### R Jan 31: Reading Daughters

Excerpt from Fielding's *The Governess* "Monday" NACL 1832-33 plus the fairytale that should appear in this context "The Story of the Cruel Giant Barbarico, the Good Giant Benefico, and the Little Pretty Dwarf Mignon" NACL 190-99; and excerpts from Mary Wollstonecraft's *Original Stories from Real Life* (1788) NACL 2091-5.

## Complete Journal Assignment 3

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## Week Five: Fantastical Fictions I

### T Feb 5: Trailing Clouds of Glory

William Wordsworth "Intimations of Immortality" on D2L, Hans Christian Andersen "The Little Match Girl" (1845) also on D2L and "The Nightingale" (1834) NACL 215-20.

*Hand in journals in class on Tuesday.*

### R Feb 7: Techno Tales

Ted Hughes "The Iron Giant: A Story in Five Nights" NACL 302-17.

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## Week Six: Fantastical Fictions II

### T Feb 12: Alice Down the Rabbit Hole

Excerpts from Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865): Chapter 1 "Down the Rabbit Hole", Chapter 2 "The Pool of Tears" and Chapter VI "Pig and Pepper" on D2L.

### R Feb 14: Fantasy and Empire: The Politics of Modern Fantasy

Excerpts from Edith Nesbit's *The Phoenix and the Carpet* (1904) chapters 1 & 3 NACL 591-602, 612-22.

### Complete Journal Assignment 4

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## Week Seven: Stories from Real Life

### T Feb 19: Contrary Mary's Secret Garden

Excerpts from Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911) Chapters 1-2 (pp. 3-25), and chapters 7-9 (pp. 63-93) on D2L

### R Feb 21: An American Road Trip

Excerpts from Christopher Paul Curtis' *The Watsons Go to Birmingham 1963* (1996) on D2L.

### Short Review Paper due Thursday

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## Week Eight: More Stories from Real Life

### T Feb 26: Another Disagreeable Girl Negotiates Some Home Truths...

Katherine Paterson's *The Great Gilly Hopkins* (1978)

### R Feb 28: Gilly Hopkins continued...

### Complete Journal Assignment 5

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## Week Nine: Sound Sense – Poetry for Children

### T Mar 5: Sampling Traditional Verse Collections

From Chapter 4 of Kathleen Horning's *Cover to Cover* 68-79, Poems from NACL Edward Lear "The Owl and the Pussy Cat" 1155, Lewis Carroll "'Tis the Voice of the Lobster", "Jabberwocky" 1158-9; Robert Louis Stevenson "Bed in Summer" 1182, "Where Go the Boats" 1184, "Foreign Children" 1188, "Picture Books in Winter"; Walter de la Mare "Not I" 1204, "A Widow's Weeds" 1214, "Bewitched 1223" and "The Song of the Mad Prince" 1228.

**R Mar 7 : Ways with Words**

(All NACL) Nancy Willard "The Wise Cow Makes Way, Room and Believe" and Blake Leads a Walk on the Milky Way" 1160-1, Margaret Mahy "Seventeen Kings and Forty-Two Elephants" Charles Causley "I Went to Santa Barbara", "Mrs. McPhee" 1254-5 and "I am the Song" 1266; Lucille Clifton "Some of the Days of Everett Anderson" 1268-9; Pat Mora "Words Free as Confetti" 1273; Grace Nichols "Poor Grandma" 1285 and "The Fastest Belt in Town" 1286.

*Complete Journal Assignment 6 and hand in Journals before you escape for break*

**SPRING BREAK**

**Week Ten: Modern Moral Fiction?****T Mar 19: Of Mice and Men**

Kate DiCamillo's, *The Tale of Desperaux* (2003)

*Final Essays Proposals are due in Tuesday's class.*

**R Mar 21:** *The Tale of Desperaux* continued

**Week Eleven: Realism Meets Tall Tale****T Mar 26: Running Across the Racial Divide**

Jeri Spinelli's *Maniac Magee* (1990)

**R Mar 28:** *Maniac Magee* continued

**Complete Journal Assignment 7**

**Week Twelve: Picture Books: New Imaginative Frontiers**

**T Apr 2 NO CLASS TODAY – Attend English Department Research Presentations**

Please read chapter 5 "Picture Books" in Kathleen Horning's *From Cover to Cover* 85-113 in preparation for the next three classes and Journal Assignment 8.

**R April 4 Text and Illustration**

Introduction and pages devoted to illustrations in NACL 1051-1097 with color plates c1-32.

*Optional: Hand in three pages of your final paper for revision advice.*

## Week Thirteen: Picture Books II

### T Apr 9 In Technicolor

Lehman *The Red Book*, Sendak *Where the Wild Things Are*, De la Pena *Last Stop on Market Street*, Klassen *This is Not my Hat*. Dr. Seuss *To Think that I Saw it on Mulberry Street*

### R Apr 11 Picture Book Design Evaluation

I Bring 'em – you Evaluate 'em - no advance reading for today!

Complete Journal Assignment 8

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## Week Fourteen: The Graphic Novel

### T Apr 16: Picturing Silence

*Cece Bell's El Deafo (2014)*

### R Apr 18: *El Deafo* continued

*Final Papers are due in Thursday's Class*

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## Week Fifteen: Roads We Have Travelled

### T Apr 23 Review

### R Apr 25 Review

*Turn in Journals Thursday for final assessment.*

**They will be returned to you at the exam.**

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**FINAL EXAM: Thursday May 2, 10:15-12:15.**

## Assignments and Grade Distribution

**NB.** Complete instructions and assessment criteria will be posted on D2L well in advance of deadlines.

### 1. Journal Assignments (8 entries) Due Feb.5 /Mar 7/ April 25 20% of grade

Journal Assignments are short written exercises (approx.. 250 words each) requiring independent exploration of the resources available in the Ballenger Teacher's Center and on the web. They are informal in nature, but serious in intent. Complete instructions will be posted on D2L for each one. Please keep an ordinary notebook in long hand (writing on alternate lines) with the various pieces collected in it. Journal assignments will be evaluated three times during the semester. Hand in your whole journal on the dates

specified in the syllabus. I will mark one of the new entries in detail (chosen at random) and check the others for completeness each time I collect your journals.

**2. Review Essay (1000 words) Due Feb 21 10% of grade**

This will be a short paper inviting you to consider contemporary texts in the light of reviews written about them. A complete description of what is required will be posted on D2L in early February.

**3. Final Essay Proposal Due Mar 19 10% of grade**

Your proposal should include a working title for your paper, a short, but detailed summary of what you intend to cover and an annotated bibliography of at least 4 to 8 sources (including primary and secondary texts) cited in MLA format. Topic suggestions and a sample proposal will be posted on D2L at the end of February.

**4. Final Essay (1500-2000 words) Due April 18 20% of grade**

This will be a formal literature paper on at least one and no more than three primary texts with some limited, but well chosen secondary material. Topics will be posted on D2L in March. You will have the option of handing in three pages of your essay early (Thursday April 4) for review and revision suggestions.

**5. Final Exam May 2 10:15-12:15 20% of grade**

A chance to pull it all together. The exam will consist of two halves, the first requiring you to identify (title, author, approximate date) quotations and comment on them. The second half will be an essay question designed to help you synthesize what you have learned. Exam review will occur during our last 2 classes.

**6. Pop Quizzes and Class Participation 20% of grade**

Since the success of a discussion class depends on all of us being prepared to talk about the readings, I will give occasional unannounced quizzes. They cannot be re-taken if you fail, are late or are absent. Screwing up one or two is not the end of the world, but a pattern of doing poorly on them will have a negative effect on your participation grade. Read (and contribute to discussions) to succeed.

**Grading and Late Papers**

With the exception of your handwritten journal, please turn in printed copies of your work, carefully proofread and properly cited. Extensions should be requested in person (in class or during an office hour) at least one week before an assignment is due. If an emergency arises, contact me by email as soon as possible.

It is your responsibility to get your work to me on paper and on time. Late work will be docked 10 percent per day unless you have a documented excuse.

**Attendance Policy**

Come to class. Talk about what you have read. Our experience this semester depends on all of us joining the discussion. If you must be absent, contact me ahead of time by email. After your third absence you will lose 3% of your course grade each time you miss class.



## **Additional Policies and Resources**

### **Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards. Don't risk plagiarism, if in doubt - cite. I am always happy to talk to you about how to represent your sources properly.

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

### **The Student Success Center**

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center ([www.eiu.edu/~success](http://www.eiu.edu/~success)) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

### **The Writing Center**

EIU's Writing Center is in Coleman Hall 3110. There you can schedule one on one conferences to work through any stage of the writing process. Feedback as you work is invaluable so take advantage of this free service. To schedule an appointment, drop in (Monday to Thursday 9-3 and 6-9, Friday 9-1) or call 581-5929 You'll be glad you did.